

Please feel free to adapt this discussion guide to suit your needs.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION/BREAKOUTS (recommended: 30 minutes or more)

Materials: large newsprint, masking tape, markers in different colors, and small sticker dots cut into sets of 4. Prior to the event, prepare four large sheets of newsprint with the following headings (you may need to make more than one of each, depending on how you decide to organize the activity):

NORMS		AVAILABILITY		POLICY		ENFORCEMENT	
Issues	Strategies	Issues	Strategies	Issues	Strategies	Issues	Strategies

(Note: Slides for this section are included in the Mythbusters powerpoint)

A. Introducing the activity & breaking into groups (5 minutes)

Before breaking into groups or launching into the discussion, provide the full group with a brief overview of the concepts:

“In the substance abuse prevention field, we have learned that it’s not enough to focus our efforts just on individual youth and families. Underage drinking is a community issue, and it needs a community solution. But what is shaping the community? There are four different factors that shape a community’s environment around underage drinking: Norms, Availability, Policy, and Enforcement. They all overlap and are inter-connected.

- Norms: What is considered normal and acceptable in this community when it comes to youth and alcohol, or when it comes to adults hosting drinking parties for youth? Who is promoting those messages? What role do media and advertising play in promoting those messages in our community?
- Availability: How easy is it for minors to get alcohol in this community? Where do they get it? Is it from retail sources? Is it from social sources, like older friends or family members?
- Policy: What are the laws, rules, and policies in this community that might encourage or discourage underage drinking? How are they communicated to the public? How are they understood?
- Enforcement: Are the policies, rules, and laws being enforced? Do people *believe* that they’re being enforced?

“During the next fifteen minutes, we are going to brainstorm ideas within each of these categories. Then we’re going to review them, and vote on some priorities for action.”

Depending on the size of the group, general atmosphere, time constraints, & availability of facilitators, you may choose to facilitate the discussion as one large group, or break out into four smaller groups.

If you do this in four smaller groups, assign each group to take on discussion and brainstorming in one of the four categories: Norms, Availability, Policy, & Enforcement. Each group should have 1 facilitator, and one volunteer note taker.

If you do this as a large group, you may want to have four volunteer note takers up on stage—one in each category: Norms, Availability, Policy, & Enforcement.

If this is a regional event, you may want to consider dividing the groups by towns and having them either choose one category to address, OR provide each town with four sheets of newsprint and assign four volunteer note takers per group so that they can address all four categories.

B. Group discussion

1. Ground Rules & Introduction (5 minutes)

- *Before you begin discussion, the facilitator should briefly go over a few ground rules:*
 - “1) This discussion is about changing the overall community environment. It’s not about blaming or pointing fingers at individual people. When you are listing problems, please do not refer specifically to individuals.
 - 2) Alcohol is a complex issue, and we need to be respectful and aware that we all come from different personal backgrounds and experiences. We are not asking anyone to disclose personal stories tonight. Instead, we want to focus the discussion on the community as a whole, and what we can do to change it.
 - 3) In discussing problems and solutions, please remember that our focus tonight is on changing ADULT behavior and attitudes, because adults are the ones who control the alcohol supply.
 - 4) Finally, let’s be open and listen to each other’s opinions and ideas with respect.”
- Intros:
 - *If done in smaller groups: Go around the circle, say name & affiliation.*

2. Brainstorm Part 1 (10 minutes)

- “Do you think our community has an environment that contributes to underage drinking?”
- *If large group: “What are some examples, and what category do you think they would fall into (Norms, Availability, Policy, or Enforcement)?” Note takers: List on 4 different sheets of paper according to what category or categories they fall into, in the left-hand column, with the heading “ISSUES.”*
- *If small groups: “What are some examples in the category of X?” (Norms, Availability, Policy, or Enforcement)*

IF YOU HAVE EXTRA TIME:

3. Brainstorm Part 2 (10 minutes)

- “We won’t be voting on strategies tonight, but we do want to start collecting some creative ideas. What might be some possible strategies to address these problems?” *Note takers: List strategies next to the problems they address, in the right-hand column, with the heading of “STRATEGIES.”*

IF YOU DON’T HAVE EXTRA TIME FOR PART 2:

- “Part 2 of this discussion is to begin to brainstorm some possible strategies to address these problems. We’ll continue the discussion with anyone who’s interested at our next meeting, after we vote on priorities for action.”

D. Reconvene the full group and review the “ISSUES” brainstormed – *Have note takers put up their newsprint so that everyone in the room can see it. Then have each group facilitator or note taker report back by reading through the list. (5 minutes)*

E. Voting on Priorities & Conclusion (5 minutes)

(Note: If you decided to do breakouts by town, the voting should also be done by town)

- “Thank you for all of these ideas. Next, we want to get an idea of our top priorities for action. We’re going to take a couple of minutes to vote. Each person will get 4 stickers. We’d like you to use the stickers to vote on one ISSUE priority to address in each category (In the left hand column). We won’t be voting on strategies tonight, but we do want to find out what areas you feel are most important for change.”
- *Have volunteers help to hand out 4 sticker dots to each participant.*
- *Meanwhile, have other volunteers post the four sheets of newsprint along the wall(s).*
- “Ready, set, vote!”
- *Once all the votes are completed, step back and identify the four action area priorities, and read them out loud to the group, along with any corresponding strategies that have been listed beside them.*
- “Thank you all for your input. We will focus on these priority areas as we move forward in our work to stop underage drinking in our community. We hope that you will join us!”



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